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ABSTRACT

This document contains texts of or notes for six presentations that were made at the 1989 and 1990 annual meetings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society. The document begins with a preface explaining that material from the meetings is or is not included and where the additional information may be found. The articles included are: (1) "George S. Counts: Philosopher or Ideologist?" (Gerald Gutek); (2) "Construct Validity, Context Specificity, and Testing for Critical Thinking" (Charles V. Blatz); (3) "'Phronesis' and the Moral Aspects of Teaching" (Jana R. Noel); (4) "Sociology and a Conservative Theory of Education" (Peter J. Goldstone); (5) "Philosophy Meets Composition: The Influence of History and Tradition in the Social Construction of Mentoring through Written Composition" (Mary Abascal-Hildebrand; Joan A. Mullin); and (6) "The Discipline of Interpretation" (Thomas I. Stark). A list of the proceedings (1977 to 1990) is included along with a list of the ERIC document numbers of the proceedings volumes. (OK)

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ADDITIONAL DIALOGUE

A Supplement to the Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society: 1989 and 1990.

(ERIC Document ED 345 987)

edited by

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PREFACE / CONTRIBUTORS

This document contains texts of or notes for six presentations that were made at the 1989 and 1990 annual meetings of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society. This material did not appear in the proceedings of those two conferences (Document ED 345 987). The texts by Gutek and Blatz were the bases for presentations at the 1989 meeting while the texts by Noel, Goldstone, Abascal-Hildebrand and Mullin, and Stark are from the 1990 meeting.

The texts of three additional presentations at the 1989 meeting were published elsewhere. They are:

Bluestone, Irving. "What Education Can Learn from Industry." Thresholds in Education (Northern Illinois University) 15 (February 1989): 10-12.

Goldstone, Peter. "Is Plagiarism Stealing?" In Essays in Academic Ethics, by David B. Annis, Betty A Sichel, Robert P. Craig, and Peter Goldstone. With an Introduction by Arthur Brown. Knoxville, Tennessee: Society of Professors of Education, 1992. 33-43.

Kaplan, Leonard and Alice McCarthy. "Education and the Family." Thresholds in Education (Northern Illinois University) 15 (February 1989): 28-32.

Three presentations at the 1990 meeting do not exist in written form. These are: Philip L. Smith's response to Ronald Swartz's Presidential Address and the presentations by Mary Abascal-Hildebrand and Richard C. Pipan in a session on teaching philosophy of education in the 90s.

An index to the the volumes of the Proceedings (1977 to the present) is also included along with a copy of the editor's vita. Please consult page 53 of this document for a complete list of the ERIC document numbers of these volumes.

The editor would like to thank his wife Marjory, Lawrence Santoro of the Chicago Sun-Times, and Ronald Swartz, Alex Makedon, Richard Pipan, Charles Bruckerhoff, Philip L. Smith, and the Midwest PES as a whole for help with his work. A special thanks goes to Father Walter P. Krolikowski, SJ who has been both friend and colleague.

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George S. Counts: Philosopher or Ideologist

By: Gerald Gutek
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Presented at the Meeting of the Midwest Philosophy of Education Society, Nov. 10, 1989

GEORGE S. COUNTS: PHILOSOPHER OR IDEOLOGIST?

1989 marks the hundred anniversary of the birth of George S. Counts, a distinguished leader in professional education. A professor of education at Columbia University's Teachers College from 1927 to 1955, Counts taught courses in the social foundations of education and comparative education. He was the author of twenty-one books and numerous articles on educational issues. From 1939 to 1941, he served as President of the American Federation of Teachers. He helped to organize the American Labor Party and then the Liberal Party in New York State. He could be both a scholar and an activist.(1)

Counts enjoys a reputation in many textbooks in the history of American education and in scholarly monographs as the man who in 1932 asked the Progressive Education convention the question--Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?(2) In that same year, Counts broadened his challenging question and asked American educators--Dare the School Build a New Social Order? When Counts asked that question which has won him a place in the history of American education, the United States was in the darkest days of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Herbert Hoover, the incumbent President, had waged an unsuccessful re-election campaign on a platform that called for reliance on the American tradition of individualism and voluntary self-help. His

victorious challenger, Franklin Roosevelt, presented an alternative in a still vaguely defined New Deal.

Fifty-seven years have passed since Counts asked his question--Dare the School Build a New Social Order? These nearly six decades provide the perspective of time to assess the meaning of the question and the impact of the man who asked it.

Counts, in many ways, was a true son of Willa Cather's Middle Border. Born in 1889 in rural Kansas, his childhood and youth was lived in an America where the westward moving frontier of open land had just ended. However, this was also the time when Frederick Jackson Turner, the American historian, pointed to the influence of the westward moving frontier in shaping the American character and outlook. For Counts, the Kansas youth, the frontier of land had passed but the imagery of the frontier of new ideas and new means of social organization remained. When in 1934, Counts, along with William Heard Kilpatrick, Harold Rugg, and others began publishing a new journal devoted to social issues, they called it the *Social Frontier*. Kilpatrick served as the chairman of the editorial board and Counts as the first editor.(4)

After being educated in the public elementary and high schools of Baldwin, Kansas and at Baker University, a Methodist institution, Counts came to the University of Chicago for graduate study in what was still the new field of education. The University of Chicago, where he studied from 1913 to 1916, was then an institution where the progressive

temperament was a powerful force. It has been the Univesity where John Dewey had established the Laboratory School and had chaired the Department of Pedagogy, Philosophy, and Psychology. Although Dewey had left for Columbia University, Counts enrolled in courses taught by Albion Small, one of the founding figures in the new field of Sociology. For Small and his associate W.I. Thomas, Sociology as well as being a new academic discipline was a study with a purpose--social reform. Counts' major professor was the head of the School of Education, Charles Judd, an advocate of the science of education. Counts began his academic career as a scholar who incorporated two approaches--the use of the statistical survey and the examination of larger social issues. By the 1930s, Counts had put aside the statistical analyzes of his earlier work for the examination of social issues.

Son of the Middle Border and inheritor of the progressive academic tradition, Counts brought with him still another scholarly dimension--comparative education. As the associate director of Teachers College International Institute, he specialized in Soviet institutions and education. By the early 1930s, he had traveled 5,000 miles through the Soviet Union, a nation in the throes of a great social, political, and economic transformation.(5) The product of Lenin's Bolsheviks, the new Soviet regime had survived Civil War and international isolation. Counts was much impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union in the early 1930s. The Soviets, under Josef Stalin, had embarked on the first of the five year plans designed to reconstruct a

backward agricultural economy and society into a modern industrial giant. The Soviet leaders, Counts observed, had correctly recognized the power of organized education as an instrument of cultural transformation. While his own country seemed to be unable to come to grips with the Depression, the Soviet were making great strides forward because of their co-ordination and centralized planning.

These, then, were the elements that Counts brought with him as he asked his question--Dare the School Build a New Social Order?: a frontier spirit and heritage, a progressive higher education, skills of sociological analysis, and a international perspective.

When he asked if educators dared to build a new social order, Counts certainly had moved from educational theorizing that was strictly school-centered. By the early 1930s, he was concerned with education's relationship to national social and economic policies. As we look back on Counts at this important stage of his career, we might ask was he a philosopher of education? Was he an ideologist? Or was he a skilled orator who was admirably skilled in posing leading rhetorical questions?

In his works that followed shortly after *Dare the School build a New Social Order?*, Counts wrote about philosophy of education. He urged educators to join with the progressive forces in the nation--the labor unions and the farmers' organizations--in creating a philosophy of education that would be bold, purposeful, and transforming. Rather than presenting his audience with a philosophy of education, he

was calling for the creating of a public philosophy of education. Such a public philosophy of education would guide the establishing of general educational purposes, shape educational policy, and define the contours of curricular development.

Did Counts's call for the creation of a public philosophy of education make him a philosopher, or was his role something other than philosopher? In probing this question, my goal is not to establish a criterion of what identifies a person as a philosopher but rather to seek to examine Counts's behavior as a professional educator in the crucial decade of the 1930s and early 1940s. Lawrence Cremin in his definitive work on progressivism in education, *The Transformation of the School*, identifies certain stages in the development of progressive education as a movement. In the first stage--from about 1890 to 1920--Cremin tells us that progressivism in politics, literature, conservation, and journalism was a general movement that encompassed an educational impulse as well. In its formative decades, progressive thought and action were interwoven. There was a central focus--the reform of American life and institutions--that united leading progressives such as Robert LaFollette, the Wisconsin Governor and Senator, Jane Addams, the founder of Hull House, and John Dewey, the pragmatist philosopher and educator. For Cremin, the first period of progressivism presented a generalized and somewhat integrated focus.(6) There were efforts by some progressives to develop a general public philosophy as distinct from but not antagonistic to

academic philosophy. For example, Herbert Croly, editor of the *New Republic*, in *The Promise of American Life*, sought to articulate a progressive public philosophy. Walter Lippman, too, was working toward the expression of what would be his statement of a public philosophy. Among the early progressives, there were those who believed that the nation needed to be guided by a set of policy statements that they referred to as a public philosophy.

Cremin, then, writes that after World War I, especially during the politically conservative decade of the 1920s, progressivism in education tended to lose its its broad political and social orientation and became a school-oriented philosophy. The 1920s was the period of the child-centered school with its emphasis on liberating children from repression and conventional schooling. The Progressive Educational Association, founded in 1919, was initially the product of child-centered progressives.(7)

In 1932, when Counts asked "Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?," he was urging progressive educators to return to the generalized social reform that had characterized the early progressive movement. He stated that middle class sentimentalities had denied that children should be imposed upon by the culture. He charged that progressives, while admittedly liberal in outlook, were operating in a four-walls of the school context that neglected the great social issues of the day. In seeking to return progressive education to its broad socially-oriented origins, Counts saw the Depression as the historic catalyst

that would renew the effort to create a public philosophy of education to help mobilize the nation for the needed general reforms. His *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* put the challenge to the nation's educators.

In arguing that progressive education should be progressive and that the country's educators should work to build a new society, Counts was returning to the earlier manifestation of progressivism that had appeared in the twentieth century's first two decades. He now found himself in philosophical debate with those who saw the school's role in very different terms. First, he had to do battle with the child-centered progressives who consistently argued that the child should be be the focus of the curriculum and that educational goals and purposes came from children. Secondly, he had to argue against a group of important educators, the Essentialists such as William Chandler Bagley, and Isaac Kandel, who saw educational purposes and curriculum coming from the historically-evolved institutions and the skills and knowledge that made such institutions functional. Thirdly, he had to challenge Perennialists such as Robert Hutchins, who in a neo-Aristotelian and neo-Thomistic perspective, saw education as being based on universally valid principles that coming from a culturally transcendent human nature were independent of time and circumstances.

Counts, the one time practioner of the science of education trained by Judd and the social theorist trained by Albion Small and the associate of the Experimentalist Dewey. found himself pushed for an answer to his own question of--

Dare the School Build a New Social Order? Calling for a the creation of a public philosophy of education was somewhat different from being a public philosopher of education. In developing his concept of a public philosophy of education, Counts was antagonistic to the child-centered progressive's emphasis on the sanctity of the child's nature, to the Essentialist emphasis on the stability of tradition, and to the Perennialist perspective of a transcendent human nature. True to his early background, education, and training, he looked to contexts--to cultural, political, economic, social, intellectual, and educational situations-- that occurred at a particular time in history and in a particular geographical setting.

In *The Social Foundations of Education*, Counts writing that education is always particular to a given time and place, stated:

> The historical record shows that education is always a function of time, place, and circumstance. In its basic philosophy, its social objectives, and its programs of instruction, it inevitably reflects in varying proportions the experiences, the conditions, and the hopes, fears. and aspirations of a particular people or cultural group at a particular point in history.
>
> Education as a whole is always relative, at least in its fundamental parts, to some concrete and evolving social situation.(8)

Clearly, Counts was a contextual theorist of education. While his orientation to educational policy might be broad, it was never transcendent. While a methodology of socio-educational analysis is present in his work, Counts was not a process-oriented philosopher like Dewey. In describing his philosophy of education, Counts claimed that it was "civilizational." In other words, each civilization had its own philosophy of education.

It is in terms of a "civilizational philosophy of education that we might look at Counts as social philosopher of education and as an educational ideologist.(9) In the 1930s, Counts was closely associated with Charles A. Beard, a progressive American historian, who was often identified as a revisionist. Beard, with whom Counts worked on the Commission on the Social Studies of the American Historical Assocaition, had developed an economic interpretation of history. In many ways, if Beard was seeking to reconstruct American history, Counts was also seeking to reconstruct American education.(10) Counts and Beard agreed that that the age of individualism was ending in the United States and that the nation was verging on a new collectivist pattern of social, economic, and political organization. For Counts and Beard, it was crucial that this inevitable form of collectivism should be democratic in structure, control, and process.

Operating contextually, Counts began to examine American civilization to find the elements that could bring about its reconstruction from a disintegrating individualistic economy

into a society that was a collective democracy. For Counts, at that time, the future was going to be collectivist. It could be a ruthless capitalist oligarchy that served the selfish vested economic special interests. It could take the form of the totalitarian Fascist corporative state. Or, it could be a genuinely democratic collectivism. Now, in Counts' writings, especially in *The Social Foundations of Education* and *The Prospects of American Democracy*, Counts was revealing more and more of an ideological tendency.

First, Counts argued, it was necessary to analyze the cultural heritage and to identify those elements upon which the reconstruction of society could proceed. The American heritage, he wrote, revealed to broad strands--two versions of the public philosophy--one Hamilitonian and the other Jeffersonian. The Hamiltonian strand emphasised private economic development and rule by an economic elite. According to this strand of thought, natural and human resources were used for private gain. A legacy of the Hamiltonian orientation were the later "robber baron" capitalists who used a myth of "rugged individualism" to amass large private fortunes. The unplanned, selfish, and exploitative nature of a capitalistic individualism had brought the nation's economy to virtual collapse. Economic malise was threatening to destroy the political foundations of the Republic.

For Counts, it was the Jeffersonian strand in the public philosophy that needed to be emphasized as the viable element in the cultural heritage to reconstruct a new social order.

Freedhold democracy, arising in the Jeffersonian tradition, continued by the expression of popular interests by Andrew Jackson, Abraham Lincoln; and Woodrow Wilson provided the element from the heritage upon which could be created a new American democracy--the new social order.

In selecting his vision of the past, Counts was following the admonition of Carl Becker and Charles Beard that each person should be his own historian. Like the ideologist who seeks to create a sense of "we-feeling" and to use that identification to mobilize popular support, Counts was creating a version of the American past that supported his vision of the new social order.

In creating this new social order, Counts argued that it was also necessary to recognize and consider carefully the new cultural element that had appeared in the twentieth century--the rise of technology. Based upon the integration of science and industrialism, the impact of technology had first transformed the material modes of life and was now being diffused throughout the culture's social forms of organization. The problem was that the new era of technology in the United States as well as in the western democracies was taking place haphardly without being planned in the popular interests.

Throughout the 1930s, Counts was functioning as an ideologist who sought to move progressively-oriented educators in the direction of a particular version of American democracy. At that time, he functioned within a particular context and some of what he argued for lies within

a context that is now past. His contextualism--while a dynamic feature of the period--also has had limiting effects on Counts more enduring legacy to educational thought.

As a contextual thinker, Counts moved as the Depression ended to other historical contexts. As the character of Stalinism revealed itself, he revised his interpretation of Soviet culture and education. When the split among among American liberals occurred after World War II, Counts would quit the American Labor Party and help organize the new Liberal Party in New York. His *The Challenge of Soviet Education* found Marxist-Leninism to rest an a sinister, conspiratorial Machiavellianism.(11) The emphasis that he once placed on the role of economic forces in conditioning social and educational institutions lessened. In his *Education and American Civiliation*, he developed a grand vision of American culture and education that emphasized the humanistic origins and humane character of American life and institutions. His concerns shifted to the protectng of human freedoms in an age where mass institutions threaten personal freedom. Like President Eisenhower, he was concerned about the potential threat that an industrial-military-corporate state posed for human freedom.

While Counts' ideological stance is found in the contexts of time and place, several of his contributions are larger than these contexts. One, he was a pioneer theorist who clearly pointed out that organized education, or schooling, exists in relationship to other institutions and to the great social, political, and economic trends of the time. Two, he, along

with the other pioneering theorists at Columbia University Teachers College, created the social foundations of education as a area of professional inquiry. Three, he gave us a useful methodology for analyzing and reconstructing society. Four, his version of the purposes of a School of Education anticipated the contemporary human services institution and the rise of educational policy studies.

George S. Counts sought to engage the public in creating a public philosophy of education. He was a catalyst for the kind of educational philosophy that leads to policy formulation. He was also a contextual thinker who at times in his career functioned as an ideololgist for his version of the past and of what the future should be.

END NOTES

(1) For Counts' life and career, see George S. Counts, "A Humble Autobiography," in *Leaders in American Education: The Seventieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 151-176. Also, see Gerald L. Gutek, *George S. Counts and American Civilization: The Educator as Social Theorist* (Macon, GA.: Mercer University Press, 1984), pp. 4-14.

(2) George S. Counts, "Dare Progressive Education Be Progressive?" *Progressive Education* 9 (1932), 257-58.

(3) George S. Counts, *Dare the School Build a New*

Social Order? (New York: John Day Co., 1932).

(4) George S. Counts, "Orientation," *Social Fronter* I (1934), 4.

(5) Counts' early books on Soviet education were *A Ford Crosses Soviet Russia* (Boston: Stratford Co., 1930) and *The Soviet Challenge to America* (New York: John Day Co., 1931).

(6) Lawrence A. Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), pp. 3-126.

(7) Ibid., pp. 243-245.

(8) George S. Counts, *The Social Foundations of Education* (New York: Charles A. Scribner's Sons, 1934), p. 1.

(9) For such an analysis, see Gerald L. Gutek, *George S. Counts and American Civilization.*

(10) Lawrence J. Dennis, *George S. Counts and Charles A. Beard: Collaborators for Change* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989).

(11) George S. Counts, *The Challenge of Soviet Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1957).

(12) George S. Counts, *Education and American Civilization* (New York: Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 1952).

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Construct Validity, Context Specificity and Testing for Critical Thinking

A recent discussion on test validity argues that in order to show a test performance truly reveals the ability tested for, we must show that the presence of that ability would best explain the test performance recorded. At the same time, many researchers have been moving to the position that no results of interest to social scientists, for example explanations of test performances, can be explained by processes which can be understood in a context free way. When we apply these insights to the challenges of valid testing for critical thinking abilities and dispositions, the result gives pause. If there are domain, discipline, problem or even classroom idiosyncracies in what is good reasoning, if these differences are to some extent the result of variable teacher-student communications, decisions and negotiations, then, the variables of critical thinking ability and tendencies will differ in ways possibly limiting the legitimate claims of construct validity for critical thinking tests over class materials.

In this paper, I will begin with a presentation of the "best explanation" view of construct validation mentioned above. Then I will move to an exploration of some of the context specifics that might importantly vary explanations of critical thinking performances across individuals, classes, schools, districts and larger units of the education delivery system. My ultimate aims are two: First, I want to explore some of the trade-offs between test validity, standardization of test/instructional expectations, and, the scope of legitimate claims about critical thinking abilities and dispositions. Second, I want to explore some of what instructors and administrators would have to do, in their teaching and administrative efforts, in order to have construct valid and so contextually sensitive measures of individual critical thinking achievement or mastery.

Construct Validity, Context Specificity and Testing for Critical Thinking

Charlie Blatz
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An important recent paper argues that we should move toward understanding construct validity in the spirit of a realist philosophy of science. (Steven Norris, "The Inconsistencies at the Foundations of Construct Validation Theory" in E.R. House [ed.] Philosophy of Education [San Francisco, Jossey-Bass, 1983]) According to this approach, part of the task of establishing that a test performance truly reveals the ability or other feature tested for lies in showing that the presence of such a feature, in the degree indicated by the test performance, would best explain the performance recorded. To the extent that several measures provide convergent evidence for this explanatory claim, the argument for test validity is stronger (presumably, up to some point).

At the same time, many researchers have been moving to the position that no results of interest to social scientists, for example explanations of test performances, can be explained by processes which "are steady and can be fragmented into nearly independent systems." Consequently, construct validation cannot be considered to be dependent upon accommodating testing and other research to enduring and operationally isolated explanatory processes. (See e.g., Lee J. Cronbach, "Beyond the Two Disciplines of Scientific Psychology," American Psychologist, February, 1975, page 123.)

When we apply these insights to the challenges of valid testing for critical thinking abilities and dispositions, the result gives pause. (Part of the impetus for such an application comes from John McPeck, Critical Thinking and Education (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981.) If there are domain, discipline, problem or even classroom idiosyncracies in what is good reasoning, if these differences are to some extent the result of variable teacher-student communications, decisions and negotiations, then the variables of critical thinking ability and tendencies will differ in ways possibly limiting the legitimate claims of construct valid critical thinking tests on class materials. (The situation could only be more complex and tenuous for tests of transfer of critical thinking acumen and propensities outside of the classroom to other classes or to the student's extra-mural life.) But then, how are we to achieve any manageable cross class/instructor, building, district, or educational region accountability for teaching enhanced with attention to critical thinking. Without such accountability, how are we to fairly assess a student's critical thinking competencies and tendencies? How are we to assess a teacher's, a

building's or a district's achievements at using critical thinking in instruction?

In this paper, I will begin with a presentation of the "best explanation" view of construct validation mentioned above.

Then I will move to an exploration of some of the context specifics that might importantly vary explanations of critical thinking performances across individuals, classes, schools, districts and larger units of the educational delivery system. Next I will delve into some of the implications of these context specifics within a "best explanation" test validation framework.

My ultimate aims are principally two in number: first, I want to explore some of the trade-offs between test validity, standardization of test/instructional expectations, and, the scope of legitimate claims about critical thinking abilities and dispositions. For example, I will argue that standardized testing across schools, districts and regions can claim validity only when accompanied by strict standardization of classroom instruction and that the price of that standardization in terms of student learning, and classroom intrusiveness may far outweigh the worth of having broadly inclusive and valid claims of critical thinking achievement and mastery. Thus teachers and administrators face a serious choice between highly context sensitive measures attuned to individual classes or class segments, and less valid system-wide assessments of critical thinking instruction. This is a choice they do not face in their concerns for competency in mathematics and chemistry, for example.

Second and assuming they choose in favor of construct validity, I want to indicate some of what instructors and administrators would have to do, in their teaching and administrative efforts, in order to have valid contextually sensitive measures of individual critical thinking achievement or mastery.

One requirement is that administrative accountability in the area of critical thinking should <u>not</u> be for specific critical thinking abilities or propensities. That is the provence of the classroom or program teacher. Administrators, instead, should be responsible for ensuring that teachers and units of instruction are appropriately sensitive to uses of critical thinking that are defensible in context specific ways. Short of rigorous, systemic standardization, administrators must set aside standardized achievement or competency tests in this area in favor of nurturing teaching and programs informed by contextually variable standards of good reasoning. They must become defenders of teaching and programs paying proper attention to critical thinking and cease trying to defend the specifics of what their teachers and programs offer in the arena of critical thinking. They will need to certify that their teachers and programs are good at what they are about, rather than certifying that the

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students coming out of the system have learned certain things. And these are two different certifications!

A second example of needed adjustments is that teachers would have to come to see their teaching as involving students in contextually specific projects of reasoning well about subject matter issues and their importance outside the classroom. At the same time they must be sensitive to just how the good reasoning involved might generalize beyond the particular instructional unit or class in question. Teachers need to make conscious choices between keeping their instructional uses of reasoning specifically attuned to the lesson at hand or to the generalizable abilities and propensities of the reasoning involved. This choice must inform their designs of examples, exercises and testing instruments. In addition, it will inform and be informed by the teacher's relations to colleagues concerned with some of the same sorts of reasoning accomplishments. Examples of some of the options here will be given.

Thus, this paper will investigate some of the relations between construct validity, context specificity and testing for critical thinking. And it will <u>begin</u> to explore <u>some</u> of the immediate implications of these relations for teaching and administration. One major result will be a set of cautions about the prices of standardized testing in the area of critical thinking. Another major result will be to outline revised roles for administrators and teachers accountable for critical thinking but proceeding without standardized testing which is valid over multi-class or multi-school populations.

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Phronesis and the Moral Aspects of Teaching

by

Jana R. Noel
UCLA

Midwest Philosophy of Education Society,
Fall, 1990 Annual Meeting

PHRONESIS AND THE MORAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING

It may almost be taken for granted that today teachers are considered to be intentional beings, as individuals who have their own beliefs and desires in the classroom beyond just those of having students achieve at high academic levels. Research on teaching since the 1970s has examined such things as teacher cognitive processes and teacher reflective thinking. Through this rather recent emphasis, the teacher's own beliefs and desires are considered as important aspects of the teaching situation. And with the publication of the book Moral Dimensions of Teaching comes a further focus on this often-overlooked aspect of the schools--teachers are moral, rational agents who must act within the moral nature of the activity of teaching and the moral aspects of the school situation, while still being allowed to act on their own moral natures.

But however brilliantly these issues are discussed in this book and in other arenas, there is lacking still in the discussions an element within the teacher's own thoughts which would allow the teacher's beliefs, desires, intentions and emotions to be brought to bear on the very moral situation of teaching. Such an element can be found in Aristotle's notion of *phronesis*, or practical wisdom. The Aristotelian account of *phronesis* is tied to virtue and to ethical theory inextricably: "it is evident that it is impossible to be practically wise without being good" (NE IV. 12, 1144a29-b1). The hypothesis here will be that (a) since teaching is a moral activity which involves virtuous acts, and (b) *phronesis* is a moral aspect of a practical situation which allows an individual to act virtuously, then (c) *phronesis* is an aspect of human reasoning that should be explored when discussing the moral nature of teachers and of teaching.

Aristotle's Account of *Phronesis*

The account of practical reasoning offered by Aristotle, mainly in the Nicomachean Ethics, De Motu Animallium, and De Anima, has served as the basis for virtually all antecedent discussion on practical wisdom. Aristotle describes practical wisdom as aimed at human ends, and that the end of practical wisdom is actions. It is part of a conceptual framework in which a person's beliefs, desires, emotions, experiences with particulars, knowledge of universals, and intentions interact in a reasoning process which leads to the conclusion to act. As such, it cannot involve mere precepts or rules which are supposedly applicable to every single human being. Every piece of information must interact with each person's own action components, in individually unique combinations and sequences, before the conclusion--a propositional decision about an action to take--can be reached.

Practical reasoning, besides the obvious relevance to action, is also intended for used in directly individual situations. Alisdair MacIntyre (1989?), discussing Aristotle's view of practical reasoning, states that practical reasoning "involves the capacity to bring the relevant premises concerning goods and virtues to bear on particular situations" (p. 123). This statement is filled with the background concepts and premises which flesh out the description and use of practical wisdom. The concept itself is in fact an encapsulation of part of Aristotle's entire theory of ethics. Practical wisdom requires virtue in dealing with human goods. It involves the actions of deliberation and choice. It involves an individual's beliefs and desires. And it involves the rational analysis of situations for deciding upon virtuous goals and actions.

Deliberation. Aristotle clearly sets out the role of deliberation in his view of virtuous action when he states that "The man who is without qualification good at deliberating is the man who is capable of aiming in accordance with calculation at the

best for man of things attainable by action" (1141b8-18). Here the individual has knowledge of and takes account of the ends that will be good for mankind. The stance taken here will be that the result of this deliberation about the best ends will be the universal premise about a good, which is the major premise of the practical syllogism stating the final end to be aimed for. Engberg-Pederson calls this idea the "grasp of the end." The author states that *phronesis* involves "(i) the ability to deliberate and (ii) the simple possession in explicit form of the grasp of the end that is presupposed by deliberation" (p. 224).

Practical Syllogism. Many writers on Aristotle's ethical theory discuss practical reasoning as if it were strictly a practical syllogism, with the syllogistic form. Writers have focused on this formal construct and have called it "practical syllogism" or "practical argument." The term "practical syllogism" itself, however, actually is not used by Aristotle (Hardie, Macintyre). What is more plausible is the relation of the practical syllogism or argument to the concept of practical reasoning. Shirley Pendlebury (1990a & b) suggests that the practical argument is a formal reconstruction of a piece of practical reasoning. The argument is a specific form of the practical reasoning undertaken by the individual. The individual's practical reasoning process is formally represented by this practical argument.

The most basic form of the "practical syllogism" was laid out by Aristotle in De Motu Animalium 6-8. The form of the argument consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion, from those premises. The major premise, variantly called the initiating premise, is a propositional expression of the individual's desired end. This is a universal premise, stating a general good to be reached. It is generally considered to be a desire on the part of the individual agent.

The next part of the practical syllogism takes into account the individual agent's perception of his/her own particular situation. Included as the content of the minor premise will be one of a collection of possible alternatives available in the present situation. The minor premise is a belief of the individual about what is possible in this situation, based on perceptions of the situation. The conclusion of this syllogistic argument will be taken here to be a propositional statement about an action to be taken.

Means-End Reasoning. However, Aristotle writes in the NE Book 3 as if the selection of an end is not a part of practical reasoning. This is a controversial aspect of Aristotle's account which was initiated by Aristotle himself, when he discussed practical reasoning as if it were solely a means-ends deliberation. Aristotle explicitly states in NE Book 3 that "We deliberate not about ends but about means" (1112b11). This view arises in part as a result of the necessary final human good prescribed by Aristotle--*eudaimonia* , or human flourishing. According to Aristotle, humankind automatically aims for *eudaimonia* , and this leads to his statement that we only deliberate about means. For Aristotle does not allow deliberation about those things which are invariable, nor which are eternal, nor which are brought about by chance. Aiming for human good, like deciding to heal a person physically, is invariable on Aristotle's account, and is therefore not open to deliberation. Therefore practical reasoning must not be about ends but only about means.

If this were the case, then practical reasoning would be a strictly technical notion, and practical wisdom would not involve the selection of the universal good for man. It would be merely a strictly technical decision about means toward a pre-determined end. And if this were the case, then practical reasoning would not be appropriate for use as the basis for the very practical and ethical activity of teaching. For if teachers are not allowed a choice in what are to be the goals of the actions they

undertake in the classroom, then practical reasoning would not be an improvement on any other research programs that have proposed and used. Researchers would again be examining the teachers' observable means in the classroom as if these were the essence of teaching.

Aristotle does, however, attach more emphasis to the ends in his ethical theory of practical reasoning. Especially in Book 6 of the NE, Aristotle discusses the part which practical wisdom plays in choices about ends as well as means. As Hardie points out, Aristotle in Book 6 (1142b31-33) of the NE requires that the individual who possesses practical wisdom must not only deliberate "with regard to what conduces to the end" but also that this individual "apprehends truly" that very end.

Virtue. The discussion of the selection of the good for mankind demonstrates the important part that virtue plays in practical reasoning. Even in the discussion of the syllogistic form given to practical reasoning, the ethical importance is seen. For Aristotle even gives ethical terms to the major and minor premises of the syllogism. Aristotle uses the terms "the good" and "the possible" to describe the content of these premises. Understanding the good for man is the beginning of *phronesis* . Thus, virtue is required at the very start of practical reasoning. *Phronesis* is "dependent on virtue for the correctness of its own starting-points" (Kenny, p. 163). It is dependent on the understanding of "the good," which will be the first and initiating premise of practical reasoning.

However, it is not only the universal good which the individual man seeks in practical reasoning. For as Aristotle writes, "practical wisdom is concerned with the ultimate particular which is perception" (NE1142a25-27). In fact, this is one aspect of the separation between theoretical and practical wisdom which Aristotle posits. Theoretical wisdom is about knowledge of principals, such as scientific theories, and aims at understanding. Practical wisdom, however, is about particular actions, and is aimed at human ends. As discussed earlier, the individual who is practically wise looks at his/her own individual situation and determines what type of case, within the framework of the universal good already placed in the mind, is appropriate in the individual situation. In fact, this further step of practical reasoning has to do with "the possible." As discussed earlier, the individual situation is complex and has many varying aspects. The individual must be able to deliberate through these facets to determine what actions are possible to take on the way to reaching the end of the human good selected. And also as discussed earlier, Aristotle allows practical reasoning specifically for variable situations, those which are under our control. Situations requiring action are often full of "possible's", and the person of practical wisdom, one who can reason practically, is one who can take perceptions about these possible's and decide which actions would lead to previously known universal goods for man. Hardie points out that Aristotle requires the desire for an end to be right desire and the reasoning toward that end to be true. Hardie writes that "To have practical wisdom is to be able to envisage good ends and not only to be able to see how they can be attained" (Hardie, p. 236). Aristotle describes practical wisdom in these words: "it is a true and reasoned state of capacity to act with regard to the things that are good or bad for man" (Ross, p. 142). Individuals who reason practically are able to determine the possibilities of human action in accordance with the "right desire" which is evident in the initiating point of *phronesis* . This reasoning is part of the "intellectual virtue" of practical wisdom. *Phronesis* is an intellectual virtue which is part of man's rational soul, on Aristotle's account. *Phronesis* is specifically a deliberative state which allows the individual who attains it to be able to ascertain what is good for mankind, and then to deliberate about how best to reach that good.

And Hardie reminds us of the virtuous effort required in this grasping of ends. Hardie discusses Aristotle's idea that *phronesis* , or practical wisdom, is different from *deinotes* , which is cleverness. For cleverness in Aristotle's terms signifies that an individual is very good at finding means to ends. However the individual of practical wisdom is "a man who can be trusted to make right choices. The latter, because he has ethical virtue as well as cleverness, aims at good ends" (p. 251).

It is clear, then, that the foundation of an ethical theory is given here by Aristotle with his proposition of *phronesis* , or practical wisdom. In fact, Aristotle ties practical wisdom and virtue together inextricably: "it is evident that it is impossible to be practically wise without being good" (NE IV. 12, 1144a29-b1). It is this sense of the ethical importance of *phronesis* that shows in an examination of the different interpretations given the term by various commentators on Aristotelian ethics. Practical wisdom is the most common phrase attached to *phronesis* . Other scholars have used the terms 'prudence' and 'moral insight' when discussing the term, demonstrating the ethical nature of the concept. ( ) states that *phronesis* is "a faculty of knowing right from wrong in matters of conduct." This required connection between *phronesis* and virtue is to be seen when the person who is practically wise demonstrates virtuous conduct. Practical wisdom, in fact, is the force behind virtuous actions. Another scholar describes *phronesis* as "moral discernment" ( ). This analysis can be seen as appropriate when taking into account the place that Aristotle puts on perception. Moral discernment would come into play as the definition because of the need in *phronesis* for the individual to be virtuous and to know the right and good ends for mankind. Discernment comes in when the individual is able to analyze the present situation and discern the aspects of the situation which lead to certain possibilities that can forward the process of reaching the desired and reasoned end.

Importance of Aristotle's Account of Practical Reasoning to Research on Teaching

Soltis (1985) shows how an analysis of the concept of teaching leads to the view proposed by Aristotle and here: teaching "is the adaptive, intelligent merger of one's goals with the possibilities and limits of the concrete situation" (p. 75). In this Aristotelian view, each individual teacher has his/her own background, with unique experiences, with differing beliefs, desires, and concerns, differing professional and personal knowledge, and different goals and purposes within education. Thus central to the proposition of Aristotle's account of practical reasoning as the basis of research on teaching is that teachers be recognized as intentional agents and teaching as an intentional action. Teachers, as human intentional agents, have complex combinations of beliefs and desires and must act in complex environments. Therefore any theory suggested as a basis for research must not suggest maxims or rules to which all, or most, individuals should adhere in all, or most, situations. The discussions by various commentators regarding Aristotle's view of measuring practical wisdom makes clear the appropriateness of Aristotle's account as the basis for research on the activity of teaching on this account (Wiggins and Pendlebury). Each author discusses the appropriate specification of ends in practical reasoning. Wiggins expresses this well:

> Inasmuch as the syllogism arises in a determinate context, the major premise is evaluated not for its unconditional acceptability, nor for embracing more considerations than its rivals, but for its adequacy to the situation. It will be adequate for the situation if and only if circumstances that could restrict or qualify it and defeat its applicability at a given juncture do not in the practical context of this syllogism obtain. Its evaluation

> of its essence is dialectical, and all of a piece with the perceptions and reasoning that gave rise to the syllogism in the first place. (p. 234).

Pendlebury discusses the importance of this in the teaching situation: "If she [the teacher] has no sense of which ends are appropriate in teaching or if her specification of those ends is myopic or misguided, her practice is self-defeating" (p. 178).

Several publications (Tom, 1984; Sirotnik 1990) have expended much of their discussions to the moral nature of teachers and of teaching. Teachers are essentially moral agents. They act in social situations and directly effect another human being's development. A particular strength of the present proposition is that teachers ar able to evaluate the moral aspects of a situation. For teachers deal daily with the consideration of right and good conduct and must act on clear reasoning and principles. For as was discussed earlier, the account of practical reasoning followed here is not a strict means-ends deliberation. The wider account of practical reasoning expects further analysis and evaluation of acts and action components as to whether they are morally "right", rather than an analysis merely of whether a set of means will technically lead to some ends. The evaluation is not simply of whether a particular alternative will lead to a desired action as if the process of reasoning toward an action were a jigsaw puzzle. Instead, practical reasoning must grapple with the normative issues of whether the final goals are proper for the students in the schools, whether the various alternatives are morally appropriate to undertake with children of certain ages, and whether beliefs and desires, the very moral aspects of the action sequence, are going to be undertaken after the interaction of these intentional human characteristics. Thus practical wisdom is that faculty which recognizes those morally and virtuously determined ends of action and which must grapple with various personal beliefs and desires regarding both the means and ends of an action. Further, the examination of these normative aspects is based on a framework of reasoning processes. It is not mere ungrounded reflection, but rather is a basic framework underlying human action in general. The teacher's practical reasoning therefore may be assessed for its internal rational plan, for its coherency and consistency.

Another controversial aspect of Aristotle's account of practical reasoning--whether individuals can deliberate and reason practically about ends-- is given a new possibility by several commentators (Hardie, Greenwood, Irwin, Wiggins, and Pendlebury). The suggestion is that there are "components" or "constituents" to ends which, while being parts of ends, can still be deliberated about because they are not final goods in themselves. This is especially important in teaching. The final good of education in the United States which is commonly given as a goal is that "The student will become educated." Now in the same sense in which Aristotle does not allow a doctor to deliberate about whether to try to heal an individual, a teacher will not likely deliberate about whether to attempt to educate a student. However, as in the medical situation in which an end may be decided upon that requires reduction of fever--as a component to the final end--so the teacher may also deliberate about components to the ends. Because of institutional standards and limitations, the teacher often does not deal with the concept of eudaimonia every day in his/her teaching activities. Instead, teachers fact short-term objectives which are daily end goals in themselves. These objectives as ends are deliberated about by teachers who look at various alternatives while selecting not only the best means to reach those ends, but also about which ends in themselves will be best. Wiggins ( ) discusses the possibility of practical reasoning by a professional including selection of more short-term objectives as components of an end: "a man... deliberates about what would count as the achievement of the not yet completely specific goal which he has already set himself in the given situation" ( ). Again the idea of developing a deliberation and reasoning about "components-to-ends" is of use here.

In sum, the idea that practical reasoning is a purely technical notion, allowing only deliberation and reasoning about means to ends, does not hold up when taking into account Aristotle's ideas regarding the connection between virtue and practical wisdom. For to be virtuous on Aristotle's account, one must comprehend the good for which one is aiming. And there are many components or constituents of that final good of eudaimonia which can serve as desired ends within practical situation. And this is especially true in the educational situation.

Summary

In sum, then, teaching is an intentional human activity. Any theory proposed to underlie teaching also must be one which underlies general human action. Aristotle's account of practical reasoning sets forth the reasoning process that leads to an action, reasoning which includes the intentional aspects of a person's being. Practical reasoning, as shown here, goes beyond the strictly linear format seen in deductive reasoning, beyond the format of the practical syllogism commonly ascribed to Aristotle. It is specifically about actions, about ends that can be reached through actions, about the individually selected means to reach those ends, and about the background practices and events within which such acts are situated. It allows for complex situational factors, along with the intentional features of the individual, in the selection of an action. Aristotle's account of practical reasoning takes into account both the practical aspects of the teaching situation and the intentional nature of the teacher, as it it acts as a general theory underlying human action in general. Thus, the activities of teaching can be based on this account. And this framework may serve as a basis on which to assess programs of research on teaching.

To tie up this concept, MacIntyre is again insightful and useful in describing Aristotle's account of practical reasoning. He writes:

> On Aristotle's view the individual will have to reason from some initial conception of what is good for him, being the type of person that he is, generally circumstanced as he is, to the best supported view which he can discover of what is good as such for human beings as such; and then he will have to reason from that account of what is good and best as such to a conclusion about what it is best for him to achieve here and now in his particular situation. (p. 125)

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SOCIOLOGY AND A CONSERVATIVE THEORY OF EDUCATION

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Christopher Hurn's The Limits and Possibilities of Schooling: An Introduction to the Sociology of Education has been in print for twelve years, and a second, much revised edition was published in 1985. Over the years I have used this text in both undergraduate and graduate education, and despite the quarrels that I wished to place with parts of the argument, I have been impressed with the sweep of Hurn's organizing framework and with the clarity and reasonable judgment that mark much of what Hurn has to say. My opinion, however, does not seem to be widely shared by colleagues in the Foundations of Education and the text has not occasioned widespread critical discussion in literature with which I have contact.

The first part of this essay, therefore, will necessarily be devoted to developing my understanding of Hurn's aims, the questions he is involved in discussing and the answers that he prefers. In the second part of the essay, I will attempt to carry on Hurn's discussion beyond what he has himself argued, and to redress what appear to me to be some failures to complete his own program.

One of the things that continues to attract me to The Limits and Possibilities is that it is an example of what I call "state of the art" literature. Hurn sets himself the task of organizing large bodies of research into a coherent and enlightening framework. This is to say that the work does not feature original research but does a job of organizing and connecting research from a number of bodies of literature that do not always or normally pay attention to one another. These bodies of literature include the sociology and history (and to a lesser extent, economics)of education as well as policy oriented research, and survey and case studies of American and international education. Of course, much is always left out of such state of the art studies and everyone will have their pet author(s) whose absence seems an unforgiveable oversight.If we are able, however, to temporarily refrain from addressing this difficulty, we can see that Hurn's overview is a genuine contribution, and one that can forward thinking in the foundations of education.

The general framework can be rendered in a fairly simple fashion and remains the same in both editions. We are told that there are two (well, three)major theories of schooling. The first theory is identified as a functionalist theory (also called a paradigm) and its general outlines are clear enough. The institutions of schooling are connected to the broader society as a dependent variable is connected to an independent one. Changes in the needs of society bring about changes in schooling, and the view of society is basically a positive one. Modern society, on this view, is increasingly meritocratic, democratic, tolerant and dependent upon expert knowledge. As society needs people with democratic attitudes and skills, and workers with broad cognitive skills and flexible minds, schooling changes and adapts to produce the skills and attitudes required for modern living.

The functionalist view is also supported by human capital theory which postulates that schooling is a sound investment for both the individual and the society at large.

The functionalist view which is simultaneously descriptive and celebratory is described by Hurn as being the received view about schooling. Perhaps because it went for so long unchallenged, the functionalist view has received few extended formualtions, and seems to exist almost as an unspoken ideology/sociology. Some theoretical roots for functionalism do exist, however, and these may be found in writers such as Parsons, Dreeben, Burton Clark, Daniel Bell and perhaps (my addition) historians such as Lawrence Cremin and later Diane Ravitch. The general ideological perspective of the functionalist theory is that of liberal politics, it is sanguine but not ridiculously so about the extent to which modern society has become more equitable and humane, and holds that if our revolutions have not been completed, that it is more and better of the same that is needed to complete them.

The major opposition to functionalism is called by Hurn "conflict theory (in the 1st. edition, radical theory)". The general view of society of the conflict theorists is starkly opposed to that of the functionalists. Conflict theorists see Western society as permeated by class domination, racism and sexism. These are not held to be lingering holdovers of traditionalist society as in the functionalist account but central, definitive features of modern society. Schooling is not connected to the genuine needs of the society, but in the case of neo-Marxist conflict theorists to the needs of a capitalist elite for trained manpower. Hurn draws on the work of a large number of neo-Marxist writers, though primarily on Bowles and Gintis, to sketch a theory in which changes in schooling are the result of an unequal class conflict. Capitalist ideology produces an illusion of an equitable and meritocratic society, but schools remain repressive of personality and intellectual development. Reformers need to recognize that business and industrial interests will deflect their humanitarian aspirations and re-direct them to shaping personality (primarily) and intellect in ways that serve not society or individuals but a corporate class structure. Hurn develops the thought of Bowles and Gintis that while open education was not quite a capitalist plot that it in fact served the needs of a capitalist elite for human capital that could meet the changing but not liberating demands of the work place.

The conflict theory is both descriptive and denigratory. There is no lack of a research basis for neo-Marxist conflict positions. Much writing in the history of education as well as curriculum theory, romantic educational criticism and the economics of education shares the general condemnation of modern society found in the conflict theory. Hurn is aware of the differnces in the leftist orientation of writers such as Michael Katz, Michael Apple, Joel Spring and Colin Greer, but wisely (in my mind) uses these and other writers mostly to supplement the theoretical formulation of Bowles and Gintis. The political orientation of conflict theory is to leftist radical politics. Without an economic transformation of Western (American)

society, school reforms can do relatively little to change the basis features of society that make schooling oppressive, the last thing that we need and what we are most likely to get, according to the conflct theorists, is more of the same.

In both editions of The Limits and Possibilities... Hurn identifies a second non-Marxist strain of conflict theory. While sharing the general pessimistic overview of modern society found in the neo-Marxists, these status-competition theorists do not explain the most important features of American education from the point of view of class-conflict. In the hands of Randall Collins, whose The Credentialing Society is Hurn's primary example of this theoretical stance, the expansion of schooling and the importance of credentials are due to the competetion for more and more schooling which takes place between ethnic and racial groups. For Hurn, the status-competition theorists are a second branch of conflict theory. They may be grouped with the neo-Marxists because they see conflict as the driving force in educational change and because they view the effects of over-education as malignant. I propose, however, to reformulate Hurn's categorization and for reasons that he himself provides, establish status-competition theory as a third and distinct body of educational theory. The reasons for placing status-competition theory in a separate category are as follows: First, Hurn emphasizes the distinctiveness of this approach. Unlike the functionalist and neo-Marxist theorists, Collins does not see a tight fit between schooling and anything else. Schooling expands and schools change on this theory not to meet the needs of society or of capitalist elites but because more people want more schooling whether it is in fact good for society or capitalists or even for themselves. Hurn complains that there is something overly rational about both the functionalist and neo-Marxist approaches, the main features of schooling and its historical changes make some kind of sense to these theories. The second point emerges from the first and it is that from the point of view of status-competition theory the educational growth from 1850 and the current monooply of schooling on our lives is not benign and not the result of a capitalist conspiracy but basically and disturbingly absurd . Hurn is not fully aware that he has presented us with a third vision of schooling and its connection with modern society. We find in the credentialling theorists an image which is not that of schooling as an adaptive or selectively adaptive organism, but an image of society and school as largely uncoupled and with the expansion of schooling producing results that no-one intended and from which no-one benefits. The third consideration that moves me to treat status-competition theory as deserving a place as a separate branch of schooling theory also derives from Hurn. When Hurn sets himself to evaluating the theories he has developed, he frequently indicates that Collins' theory does a better job of explaining matters than the other two theories. An important case in point is the overproduction of highly degreed graduates in the 1970's. This, he remarks poses a problem for both the functionalists and the neo-Marxists but not for status-competition theory. This is but one of a number of places where Hurn indicates his own preference for status-competition theory, reason enough, I submit, to treat it as a separate strain of theory about schooling.

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Status-competition theory is simultaneously descriptive and if not condemnatory, "depressing as hell." It does not have a research tradition behind it,and although Meyers is mentioned, Hurn cites almost no other writers as having contributed to it. No political orientation is identified with status-competition theory.

Having developed these three theoretical approaches to schooling, we can be mercifully short in expounding the content of The Limits and Possibilities..." What Hurn proceeds to do is to evaluate the three theories on a number of questions against differing bodies of research. The questions are "Why did schooling expand ?", "How much do/have schools promote/d inequality ? How do schools re-inforce equality ? What are the effects of schooling ? The bodies of research against which these questions are evaluated vary from question to question, they include historical studies, large scale survey research(Jencks, Coleman), case studies and national reports. The questions are obviously chosen because the different theories would suggest that one answer or another would be correct. The verdict, as to be expected, is a very mixed one. Different theories do well on different questions and none of them is demonstrably superior to one another on a consistent basis. Still, Hurn's attraction to status-competition theory is undeniable and on those questions to which it proposes answers, Hurn almost always prefers it to the functionalist or neo-Marxist theories.

Hurn's discussion of the competing theories leaves me with some questions. The questions that I will ask may not seem at first to be terribly important, but I think that they may be shown to be quite significant. I first want to inquire why it is that in addition to theories with a radical and liberal orientation we do not also find a theory with a conservative political orientation ? Perhaps this absence is not so terribly surprising in the 1st. edition which written in the mid- seventies looks back to educational literature of the early seventies. In that earlier period it might be that there was no body of conservative educational thought, or that the focus on radical theories made it seem that the differences between liberals and conservatives were mere matters of degree. There is, however, no conservative theory of schooling found in the 2d. edition either, and despite occasional references to conservative politics, no writers are identified as establishing a conservative theory of schooling. A second question that may be asked is why status-competition theory, Hurn's own favorite, is not identified with any ideological/political camp ? This is particularly surprising since Hurn tells us early on that sociological theories of schooling are inextricably interwoven with general attitudes toward society, ideologies and that the most scholarship can hope to do is to identify views of society or beliefs about human nature that are assumed by an author or theory. If Collins is no exception to this generalization, then it appears that something has been left undone in Hurn's classifying. We thus have a missing political ideology and a sociological theory without an ideology. Can we put the two together and make status-competition theory a conservative sociology of education ? Something like this will be the end result but the interesting and difficult part will be in getting there.

Part II

Let us begin by considering a part of The Limits and Possibilities which I have omitted up to this point. In the second edition, beginning in the next to last (8th) chapter Hurn embarks on a discussion of explanations of the decline in test scores which has been a focus of much recent educational thinking. This discussion, which continues really up to the end of the book, may not seem to fit neatly into the general approach of the text. It does fit, however, and I hope I will be excused for not yet indicating how. The connection is this: the whole discussion of theories of schooling is really in the service of a discussion of the long range possibilities for educational reform. While the discussion of theory dominates Hurn's text, theory is nonentheless ultimately in the service of policy and what is learned about schooling is supposed to make us wiser about the limits and possibilities for school reform. The text closes with an extended discussion of the decline in test scores to show us (and this is my, not Hurn's explanation) how important a theoretical understanding of schooling is in thinking about what is subject to change by policy and reform programs. So armed, let us enter Hurn's discussion.

In the 8th. chapter Hurn gets involved in attempting to explain the decline of test scores in the period of the 1980's. His discussion of this opens up some interesting lines of thought and, I think, puts us in a position to partially answer some things that have puzzled me in my working with his book. That there is a decline in test scores is a fact. But Hurn is not overwhelmed by the statistics comparing U.S. and foriegn students in terms of their math and science abilities. He argues that the foriegn systems are more selective and at an earlier age, so that it is not clear what the comparisions mean. Nor does Hurn agree with the conventional wisdom that the decline in test scores is directly related to America's losing its pre-eminence in international competition. In taking this position, Hurn dissents from the influential A Nation at Risk manifesto (Indeed, if I remember correctly, Hurn, a bit of an expert on international education, wrote position papers for the Risk document. The Commision apparently did not buy his dissenting arguments, and he in turn, is calling them "trendies"). Still, Hurn agrees, though I'm not sure why, that the decreasing test scores are troublesome and need explanation.

Hurn points out that the test score decline is primarily a phenomenon of secondary education, it seems that test scores are going up at the elementary level. This is an interesting contrast to what I take to be his conclusions from the central three chapter discussion of inequality. There he holds that if the schools are indeed re-inforcing inequality it is probably at the elementary and not the secondary level. He suggests that attention to case studies may inform us about the mechanisms such as "self-fulfilling prophecies" which may place lower S.E.S. students at a position of insuperable disadvantage. In any event, Hurn again wants to reject a "trendy" popular explanation of the decline in test scores. This explanation, which Hurn attributes to conservatives, is that it is precisely the school reforms of the 1960's and 70's that are responsible for the lowered test scores. On this view, the spate of humanistic, progressive, child-centered affective ...pedagogies that occupied center stage in educational discussions for some 15 or 20 years did anything and everything but attend to the cognitive development of students, that their emphasis on student choice and the provision of endless alternatives ("The Psychology of Oppression")diluted the curriculum and weakened or nearly destroyed "standards". Against this view, Hurn urges that the educational reforms of this period were centered in the elementary school and never made significant inroads into secondary education. Since test score decline is found only in secondary education, it can not be the "permissiveness" of the educational reforms which explain the decline. Hurn does not explore two positions worth mentioning at this point. The first is that some educational reforms of the 60's period got a greater grip in secondary ed. than he allows. Alternative schools and affective education along with a proliferation of electives were certainly a feature of the educational landscape in this period, and while they received somewhat less public notice than open education, they were clearly part of the educational reform movement. A second position which is worth exploring, even if it supports Hurn's argument, is that the educational reform movement never made sigificant inroads even in the elementary schools. Here we would want to examine the extent to which teachers and administrators went beyond such surface phenomena as learning to talk a new language

and creating programs that appeared to embody new pedagogical approaches. Studying this is no easy matter (see Cremin on "was progressive education ever tried ?" but is worth knowing and might strengthen Hurn's hand both in this particular argumnt and in his general position about the limits of schooling.

If Hurn is right to this point, what then does he think explains the decline of test scores ? My reading of Hurn is that he attributes the decline to the lessened ability of the the secondary school to motivate students. What does he mean by this ? While motivation is often thought of as a process of offering rewards, that doesn't turn out to be his cental focus. He says that the school no longer commands the loyalty of adolescents, gives evidence for this and explains it as part of as wider social, economic and moral changes that were going on in the 60's (but I think date farther back). The evidence is a decrease in the frequency of and attendance at ceremonial and extra-curricular activities at high-schools (he admits that the study which he performed is partly impressionistic). Hurn thinks, I gather, that the decline of such activities involves a decline of attachment to the school for the student, a weakening of the community loyalty described in Tyack's text and elsewhere. Students came to feel that the school holds nothing that is relevant to the student's real life, the school is not "for real" while heavy metal and dating are. Hurn thinks of these activities and rituals as motivators, and for the largest number of students, motivators that are indeed stronger than grades, threats of explulsion or promises of future success. If the students can find satisfaction and excitement in the school's ceremonies and activities, if they can find themselves in the school, then they will (willingly) take its academic activities moe seriously. The schools demands upon students will not be perceived as externl to them and their lives, compliance with its regulatios will be part of building and sustaining somehing in which the studnt has a part.

What has undercut students loyalty to the school, and as a result , lessened the schools ability to motivate students ? This, he says, should be seen as part of as general weakening of authority/loyalty in all of our institutions and professions (the legal cases didn't cause but reflected the breakdown of authority). Social, cultural and political trends of te 60's period everywhere emphasized the <u>rights</u> of individuals and undermined the power and authority of government, professions, families and institutions. This <u>zeit-geist</u> taught us that the authorities and those in authority were wicked or absurd and not to be trusted. The schools, the educational system and education itself fell under this criitique and were weakened accordingly.

The point that needs to be made here is that although Hurn does not see fit to blame school reforms for the decline in test scores (and after all, our knowledge of the effects of pedagogy remains impoverished)nonetheless he is willing to attribute the decline in test scores to the breakdown of authority/loyalty in the whole society of which the schools are surely a large and signicifant part. In fact, the educational reforms of the 60's were inspired by and were part of the larger critique of authority and culture.

Democractization of the classroom or school is a response to the perceived totalitarianism of schools and teachers. The teacher as facilitator was held to be not only more effective than her predecessor, the teacher as imposer or master, but also to be more moral and humane. The critiques of the neo-Marxists and some of Collins fuel a picture of schools that are authoritarian, oppressive

and absurd. Thus, the critiques and reform movements of the 60's in education are part of the general critique of authority to which Hurn refers. It thus appears that Hurn's refusal to explain test score decline by the educational reforms of the 60's is only temporary. What for him does explain the test score decline contains as a part that which he has previously rejected. The conservative position turns out to need expansion and is technical rather than sociological, but it is Hurn, should admit, importantly on target.

I earlier remarked about the absence of a body of conservative educational theory in Hurn's text. Although this needs a lot of exploration, I recommend to you the proposition that Hurn himself is the conservative, but he 's not so much hiding it from us as from himself.

Peter Goldstone

Philosophy Meets Composition: The Influence of History and Tradition in the Social Construction Of Mentoring Through Written Communication*

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Introduction

Our interdisciplinary background generates practices for teaching written communication that foster authority and strength rather than power and control through a social construction of self. By combining literary criticism and critical social philosophy with composition theory in the university classroom, we promote mentoring among professors, tutors, and students; by using writing as a means for teaching, all participants have a means for reflecting on and recreating beliefs about teaching and learning.

When we use writing as a means for both examining and illustrating the social construction of knowledge through the social construction of self, we can change the political situation in a classroom. Then we create the conditions for participating and mentoring and learning together.

When philosophy and composition come together, they announce new reponsibilities and call us to reflect deeply about the public and the personal dimensions of teaching and writing. A teacher, as a mentor, can become a certain kind of power broker, one who promotes strength through authority as a means and an end, and one who resists using power as an end in itself (Herda 1990). Once this way of thinking is foregrounded, students' different realities can emerge linguistically through their writing so that they can examine them as they create new views about themselves as learners.

Philosophy Meets Composition

Habermas considers language as one of the several critical dimensions of social life "which may be deformed through the exercise of power" (Thompson 1981:3). Foucault's work (1979) helps us understand that unexamined, product-oriented teaching practices in written composition continue the exercise of power over knowledge as a method of discipline and control. In considering that the practices of composition instructors are fed by teaching traditions and societal assumptions, Shaughnessey (1977) points to the false expectations created by preconceived notions of student error. Gadamer (1975) likewise explains that tradition is the source of our preconceptions, or prejudices, about the world.

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As Thompson traces the way philosophers write about understanding, he explains Gadamer's contribution: that the meanings we create are not acts of isolated subjectivity, but intersubjectivity because meaning "stems from the traditions to which one belongs" (1981:41) in social life. However, we accomplish understanding through language, since "tradition itself is linguistic" (Thompson 1981:41) and we come to understand our historical selves through language. Thus, our historically created selves continue to select and determine how we read, think, construct texts, and interact within social institutions that are like our classrooms.

Among literary critics, such as Greenblatt (1989) and Mailloux (1989), the way we interpret texts should be located in history in order to account for the basis of our assumptions lodged in those interpretations. If, within our classrooms, participants fail to examine how language shapes knowledge and how subjective interpretation "follows the well-trodden battle-lines of social conflict" (Foucault 1979:227), then the authority of the professor appropriates the voices of the students. A classroom conceived this way substantiates Cartesian images of knowledge, rather than acknowledging socially constructed processes of teaching, learning, and knowing.

This hermeneutics of teaching, learning, and knowing is the center of Ricoeur's work (1981, 1984, 1987, 1988) is centered on hermeneutics, which is "the theory of the operations of understanding" (xxxxxxx). Hermeneutics "is construed as the restoration of meaning addressed to the interpreter in the form of a message" (Thompson 1981:46). Ricoeur's thinking enables us to examine written communication using the hermeneutics of faith, which calls for a willingness to listen to writers' voices and a respect for what the voices reveal about them as persons. Interpretation is the means for reflecting, through language, on the meanings we conceive and translate into teaching and writing.

The act of talking about writing exposes how beliefs about teaching, mentoring, and dialogue form when our histories and traditions about power and authority are examined alongside what counts as knowledge and what counts as teaching within a classroom. This sets up a classroom dialogic. Such a dialogic is particularly important for students who have limited experience with writing and are less prepared for university work because dialogic strengthens all voices that have been silenced by professors' practices (Bartholomae 1986, Fine 1987).

The relationship between students and professors calls for the latter's realization that examinging views about writing can help scrutinize the way they conceive of, assign, and review students' writing. Professors can examine the

power relations that emerge from their decisions about teaching (Freire 1986). Bertoff (1981) and Freire (1986) suggest that it is also important for students who want to become teachers themselves to examine how classroom relationships can be changed by recreated writing experiences so that they do not use their own positions in the classroom to appropriate power over students.

In our project, we not only successfully developed students' writing ability, but we were also able to promote significant changes in both tutors and professors. Our conversations about our project helped us realize that the basis for these other changes were the multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary nature of our collected backgrounds and our own histories and traditions about writing. As such, our project emerged from beliefs we created among the tutors about teaching, learning, and writing as emancipatory, empowering, and, hence, democratic practice.

Our tutors are guided by many of the same thinkers who guide our own integration of theory in composition (Bertoff 1981, Bruffee 1984, 1986, 1984, Emig 1985, Flowers and Hayes 1981, Fulwiler 1982, Shaughnessy 1977, Vygotsky 1962), education (Bowers 1987, Dewey 1938, Freire 1986, Richardson 1990, Van Manen 1990), and philosophy and literature (Bakhtin 1981, Bialostosky 1989, Heidegger 1967 , Gadamer 1975, 1976, Habermas 1972, Ricoeur 1981, 1984, 1985, 1988, Rorty 1989). Since our project is, itself, a social construction, it was multi-dimensional rather than linear, that is, we did not first discuss theory and then create the project.

Instead, each practice and each conversation about our practice emerged through the hermeneutic dimension of the social construction of knowledge in that each informed the other in a dialectic as we participated together. However, because you were not participants with us as we developed the project, and interpreted and created our histories about writing, we will discuss first the theoretical framework that supports our writing project and blurs genres (Geertz 1975) as we examine the place of intersubjectivity in mentoring through writing. Then we describe the project itself.

The Social Construction of Knowledge

The social construction of knowledge can be understood better by accounting for the way in which history and tradition enable us to give voice to our experiences with written language. Thompson points out that "speaking and writing are alternatively and equally fundamental modes of the realisation of discourse" (1981:52). Therefore, we must examine the way we talk about our historical framework because our language simultaneously serves as the means for creating mentoring, understanding knowledge, looking back

onto what we have created by translating and interpreting mentoring processes, and writing about our ideas.

Reflecting on this simultaniety can illuminate our historical frameworks about writing as expressions of our language, forms of knowledge, ideas about process, and voice. Ultimately, what we think about writing has major implications for integrating it into the way we teach about writing. This explains why, when we are concerned with power and control, college and university coursework typically establishes minimal opportunities for students' voices because power positions rely on technical approaches to teaching writing (Britton 1982, Shaughnessy 1977). That technical knowledge is lodged in the professor. Thus, students continue to have major problems writing because they are neither allowed nor taught to think critically about topics through their experience.

Our project illustrates that it is possible to get a better idea of the centrality of language in teaching and learning through writing by considering our thinking. Since language is, as Vygotsky writes, "thought . . . born through words" (1962:153), and since ideas disappear once articulated in speech, writing becomes the means through which we claim our voices and through which, as Bertoff writes, the "active mind is seeing relationships, finding forms, making meanings. When we write, we are doing in a particular way what we are already doing when we make sense of the world" (1978:12). Thus, teaching through writing calls for a philosophy of education that focuses on language, history, and tradition in social relations. Ignoring their centrality results in ignoring the core of the human project.

History, Tradition, and Written Communication

Continuing from Heidegger, Gadamer suggests that we cannot escape the history and tradition we bring to writing because we create history as we live it together in classrooms; we are always already "thrown" (1975:232) into them each time we write. Bialostosky writes about dialogic conversation, such as we suggest mentoring provides, as a way to learn about others and ourselves,

> Those who take their turns speaking and listening, representing others and being represented by them, learn not just who these others are but who they themselves may be, not just what others may mean, but what they themselves may mean among others. Whether, the purview of such a conversation is a discipline, a culture, or a world of diverse cultures, (and the boundaries among these purviews

> are not fixed and given in any case), the dialogic participants will both make it what it is and be made by it, conferring identities on their fellows and their communities, even as they receive identities from them (1986:792).

Mentoring conversations can bring us much closer to thinking about writing and its capacity for learning content and about ourselves. We do, however, need to create the conditions for professors and students to understand what they need as persons to create knowledge through relationships within a new social text about writing.

Thinking is not linear. When we continuously examine and describe our histories and traditions, we create them together, simultaneously with the present as we shape the future. We similarly create knowledge. That is, we do not have to wait for some specific series of events to take place in order for us to be able to know more about writing or to change the way we think about writing and participate in it.

Knowledge, Writing, and Human Interests

Humans create knowledge out of what Habermas (1972) describes as technical, practical, and emancipatory human interests. These interests are interdependent, dynamic, inextricable, simultaneous, and non-linear. They point to the efficacy of mentoring students through their writing because these interests can be described in terms of writing. We can refer to the the technical in naming and classifying parts of writing, for example, form, mechanics, grammar. Most beginning writers have difficulties with the technical aspects of writing. Even when they do not, this interest, alone, cannot serve them in finding their voice through writing (Shaughnessey 1977). But, naming and classifying are not enough, even though they make it possible for us to use and recognize words to connect ideas in writing. Instead, we must experience practical interest.

Practical interest makes it possible to use ideas in ways that convince us and others about our positions as we make our rhetorical moves (Mailloux 1989). This practical purpose for writing helps us gather the ideas we have and then write them so that we can understand more, and so that others can seize our vocabularies to understand more. Still, comprehending words and their connection to ideas in making rhetorical moves is not enough for us to be able to create knowledge about writing itself to change writing to new forms and find new voices.

Therefore, what is required is emancipatory interest where we are more able to question ideas and reinterpret possible solutions dialogically (Bailostosky 1989). This enables us to translate our vocabularies and ideas, and those

of others, and to change conditions in classrooms so everyone can participate more as writers. Writing tutors and professors promote this participation when they help create communities in classrooms that invite students into conversations using writing. Tutors serve the emancipatory interest because they promote mutual interpretation and participation as they bridge students' and professors' communities and vocabularies. This kind of participation does not take place easily or quickly; it takes time for all of us in classrooms, and tutors can help all of us create space for that time.

The Place for Interpretation in Translating New Writing Histories

We all have the potential for writing new histories. This puts us in a very different position about our lives so the we can relate to one another differently through new beliefs about ourselves, one another, and the potential for writing. Classroom activities that promote writing as a viable means for learning are best guided by critically exploring, translating, and interpreting the meanings we bring to writing tasks.

Because we can never completely close the gap between "the spirit of the original words and their reproduction" we cannot rely on translation alone--we must understand the importance of interpretation because "translation is tantatmount to two people giving up their independent authority." Interpretation makes it possible for us to turn translation into speech (Gadamer 1975:346). Therefore, borrowing from Heidegger (1967), in order to translate meaning through interpretation we need to lift history and tradition out of writing pedagogy because they are always already there.

This view of interpretation leads to an hermeneutic view of social construction for bridging what we think to what we do together so that we can find resonance in the world with others. Gadamer writes, "every interpretation includes the possibility of a relationship with others" (1975:348). We can think about writing as having new relational potential. We are not limited to writing in the way we have always experienced it: when we collaborate, we can interpret and translate one anothers' language and actions. If we are more aware of this process when we translate and interpret each others' words, we can achieve new authority over our lives as teachers and as learners.

The Writing Project

Its History. I stumbled into this project. As a new education faculty member on campus, I had heard about the campus writing center, regularly referred students without ever having visited it first, and then found myself there one

afternoon reading a paper of my own I was struggling to complete. I was unprepared for the writing needs of freshmen since I had only taught graduate students previously. And as I lamented to the director that I was drowning in a sea of papers I had blithely assigned in my freshman-level education course so that students would learn about the value of rewrites (!), she began asking me questions about my ideas about writing. Soon after, she asked me what I would say if she were to tell me that I could have the services of a trained writing tutor to work exclusively with me and my students twenty hours per week. I was speechless at first, but elated, and that is how we began developing tutoring activity into a mentoring project.

We had started with the premise that teaching writing is synonomous with teaching critical analysis (Emig 1977, Fulwiler 1982). We therefore modeled our pilot initially on typical programs for writing across the curriculum (WAC) where trained writing tutors work with professors and students to develop students' writing abilities in these areas (e.g., Brown University, University of Chicago).

Its Elements. The uniqueness of our approach arises from the way the professors collaborate with the tutors and students. While the professor guides the tutor in her experience, so that she has consistent and significant opportunities to practice and reflect on her activities, the tutor guides the professor through conversations about the course, the students' views, and her own experience as a writer. The tutors become partners in the teaching and writing effort, suggesting and designing writing activities and discussing the teaching and writing evaluation processes. Some professors share space in their offices with the tutors because they "want the students to see her as significant because I do--so she uses my office area when she meets privately with students, and we team for some of the class activities."

Before tutors are attached to courses, they take a composition theory course; they also serve an extended, supervised apprenticeship in the College of Arts and Sciences Writing Center. There they continue reading theory which they discuss with other tutors and the director, practice with students, and return to discuss their experiences in collaborative meetings. Tutors learn the value of listening while collaborating, of giving up power to create and share authority. Instead of becoming "little teachers", the tutors learn how to simultaneously extend what they know as they draw out students' knowledge to create meaningful learning experiences through relationships (Freire 1986).

Tutors as Bridges. By linking classes with experienced tutors who are skilled in composition theory, these skilled

and informed student-tutors become natural bridges between two discourse communities: those of students and professors. We have been able to demonstrate that, using mentoring in the writing process, tutors actively bridge the language gap between them: while students learn the language of other content areas, the professors learn to understand the experiences and the complexities of the generation they teach. Similarly, tutors begin to shift from understanding just the students' discourse community to understanding more of the professor's community. In this way, they also bridge their own gap. Each participating group, professor, student, and tutor, begins to transform belief systems about writing. As a result, each group gains the opportunity to shift the power-knowledge relationship as they compose new views of themselves and their world.

A Showcased Classroom. Here, we showcase the tutor in the education course: she was a senior English major during the first phase of the project. We chose this particular course as an example because it clearly demonstrates how students' assumptions, teachers' expectations, and tutors' notions of teaching are recreated through all classroom and tutoring practices associated with writing. Enrolled also in secondary certification courses, this tutor had just taken this course, "Education in a Diverse Society," from another professor. During the project, she attended all class sessions and read all course materials, and she shared responsibility, along with the professor, for audio-taping responses to students' papers.

Audio-Taping. We have developed a unique use of audio-taping that plays an important part in breaking down barriers between students' and professors' communities and instead serves as a form of creating community among everyone in the classroom. The papers were not marked at all in order to maintain students' authority of voice.

The tutor would read students' papers into a tape recorder and comment with intonation on the effectiveness of the papers, as she recorded both her personal and professional responses. She would focus on the way in which the writing, itself, promoted or constrained her understanding of the students' intended message: she was their living audience. The professor would read and record the paper similarly: she focused on the way in which the students expressed the ideas taught in the course. In this way they both began the conversation with the students through the papers that they would later take up with them in the individual sessions. Thus, the audio-recording models and encourages an idea of

> social construction [that] assumes that the matrix of thought is not the individual self but some community of

knowledgeable peers and the vernacular of that community. That is, social construction understands knowledge and the authority of knowledge as community-generated, community-maintaining symbolic artifacts" (Bruffee 1986:777).

Writing Conferences, Content, Assignments. The students met with the tutor and the professor periodically during the course after they received the taped responses. These conferences were vital to the project's social construction. Also, the course and the writing assignments were integrated, creating another dimension of examining the topics. This way the writing assignments were not artificially appended to the course but allowed students to translate and interpret their experiences (Dewey 1938) and readings through critical and meaningful language (Bartholomae 1986, Bowers 1987, Freire 1986, and Vygotsky 1962).

The writing in this education course, "Education in a Diverse Society," is sequentially structured and centered on the three major themes of the course: democratic education (the nexus for the course), multicultural education, and the hidden curriculum and equity (Langer and Applebee 1987). The students write three short papers: one is about how teachers can serve a democratic society better, another is about the ways in which multiculturalism can promote unity and community (they compare it to the separatism promoted by pluralism), and the third is about the ways in which the hidden curriculum in schools influences equity. Then, students integrate these into a final paper that calls on them to write about how teachers can serve a democratic society better by teaching multiculturally and uncovering the hidden curriculum in order to promote equity.

They also write an essay after reading Ready From Within (Brown 1986), the story of the life of Septima Clark, a An African-American teacher-activist in the South who developed the Citizenship schools under the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Here students are asked to focus on how Septima Clark's life as a teacher can guide them in promoting democratic education. To integrate the state-mandated clinical component of the class, they write and present orally a brief ethnography of an aspect of their field experience. Also, they write a journal about their field experience, and they prepare notes (referred to as prep sheets, Pippin 1989) on assigned readings designed to serve as reference points for them in discussing the major course themes and in writing these papers.

Tutors' New Selves As Learners. Likewise, the tutor as a participant-bridge serves the students by questioning their assumptions and helping them relate their ideas within the topic context. The tutor also experiences what it is to be a

teacher: she learns the value of continually remaining active as a learner-researcher. She begins to understand the complexities in teaching, "I never imagined the complexity involved in being a teacher in the university; it all seemed so easy, until I began working in this project. For one thing, I understand so much more now about how agonizing it can be for professors to assign grades to students' work." By evaluating through tutoring the writing projects she helped create, this tutor understood the struggles they undergo when they are challenged by her to abandon surface treatment of topics and examine the assumptions underlying their statements.

Tutors engaged in our four pilot courses report experiencing a transformation resulting from the intense social interactions located in the writing activities. They likewise acknowledge that they began their work as tutors only imagining they might be able to become teachers someday. As one tutor says, her work in the project has made being a teacher a reality; she contends she is "not removed from it, but able to experience being a teacher as well as an anchor for the writing process for the students and the professor." Another tutor reports the discovery of his own authoritarian style as he attempted to move his collaborating out of an Aristotilian view of student papers. A third tutor reports struggling with the assignments both she and the professor wrote along with the students; but she acknowledges that the experience bonded them as a discourse community and blurred the distinctions between teacher and learner. In this way, the students felt freer to explore their questions together, especially about writing, rather than trying to guess what their teachers wanted them to write.

Professors' New Selves As Learners. Professors, in turn, learned to respect student experiences. This respect for student experiences extended to professors' relationships with tutors. This made it possible for the tutors to teach the professors, who otherwise would have had limited access to and experience with current writing and critical analysis theory, as one professor represents: "I learned so much about writing!" Tutors served as audience/participants for the professors as they help design appropriate classroom pedagogy which speaks to students. As this professor notes, "She was my teaching mirror." Altogether, the tutors mentored both the professors and the Writing Center director, by giving them new knowledge about students, using their learning processes to redesign teaching and tutoring practices, and reassessing research data and its underlying assumptions.

Moreover, the tutors' participation rejuvenated the professors' commitment to undergraduate education. The professors report that the tutors added a vital dimension to their teaching and helped them develop insights into

students' experience and writing. One professor notes, "Before this project I had almost convinced myself that teaching freshmen, especially about writing, would only be tolerable, not enjoyable. Another professor notes, "I learned about other ways of writing, I thought everyone wrote the way sociologists do." All the participating professors believe that the social interaction tutors helped them create within the classroom generated new views about writing, knowledge, authority, and power among all of them.

Students' New Selves As Learners. Students' experience with the writing and the tutor as participant-bridge created new meanings of self. One student writes, "This course made me look at myself more closely." Another notes a deeper sense of herself because of the course, saying it "taught me to reflect on things I already know and use them to learn new things--I really enjoyed it." A student who had difficulty with writing stated, "This class gave me confidence in myself again . . . I [had] felt like quitting college . . . [the tutor] was a big plus." Another student illustrates the social construction of knowledge and the relational features of the tutor's participation (in both the personal and the public dimensions) through her connection to the students' community: "I found [the tutor] to be very helpful in the writing format, not only because she helped us with the writing . . . but because she could relate to the students' problems (responsibilities) because she is a student herself."

Conclusion: Language Horizons, History and Tradition in Collaboration

Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, and Rorty suggest that language is a medium for understanding and promoting the moral significance of establishing in university classrooms both the public and the personal dimension of writing. Bakhtin (1981) acknowledges the heteroglossia which acts within these dimensions, while Foucault (1979) points to the power relations inherent in our social structures and therefore in our philosophies. Because these deeply rooted philosophies determi : the relationship between power and knowledge in the classroom and thereby establish barriers to learning, Freire (1986) suggests looking to students' experiences for the vocabulary with which they can overcome the oppressive forces which rob them of communicative action. Bowers' (1987) work in the sociology of knowledge points out that while we must look to students' experiences, we must also seek to challenge their thinking about their experiences to reframe their knowledge.

Within this context of critical social philosophy, literary criticism and educational theory, the composition theorists likewise point to the need for shifting relationships in classrooms. This can help us understand

empowerment in a new way. Shaughnessy (1977), who draws from Labov, notes that errors are often based on complex, self-created grammar rules which students need to discover before they can enter into another discourse community. However, as Bartholomae (1986:4) proposes, in order for students "to appropriate (or be appropriated by) a specialized discourse," they must "take on the role of privilege . . . [and] establish authority" through trying on new voices in their writing (1986:20). Bruffee (1984) continues that only by recognizing the social construction of knowledge can students gain that authority with writing in classroom, and Fulwiler (1982) explains that by opening our classrooms to students' written voices we will both teach content and establish new forms of action.

By participating in conversations about writing, such as professors and writing students can with other students, we learn that writing is a dynamic process, a never-quite-completed activity, where all can test their rationality, our prejudices, and our taken-for-granted assumptions (Bowers 1987, Gadamer 1976). Students and professors begin to see the value of rewriting their histories as they engage in a continuous conversation which reshapes their ideas about content, each other, and themselves.

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THE DISCIPLINE OF INTERPRETATION

The following diagram is a matrix of questions generated by the conjunction of the ability to ask questions and the ability to see differences. This matrix will use a commonplace difference (the verbal expression of the ability to discriminate) adapted to the Crito.

Any expression of the ability to see a difference, i.e., a commonplace difference

Commonplace Questions	Dramatic Presentation	Philosophic Argument
WHAT (Perception)	What are the examples of dramatic presentation?	What are the examples of philosophic argument?
HOW (Imagination)	How is each example of dramatic presentation also an example of philosophic argument?	How is each example of philosophic argument also an example of dramatic presentation?
WHY (Understanding)	What is the principle which unifies all of the examples of dramatic presentation and philosophic argument?	

Note: The ability to remember is also developed since the basis of the process is in the commonplace (questions and differences) which are already known.

This matrix is a general one because it uses variables. Any commonplace questions such as who, where, or when can used as well as what, how and why along with any commonplace difference. So one could have a 1X2, 2X2, ...6X2 matrix with any one commonplace difference. And since there are an indefinitely large number of commonplace differences, then the number of matrices is indefinitely large.

If a poem, say Shakespeare's Sonnet #73, were to be interpreted, then commonplace differences appropriate to that poem would be used. Such c.p.d.'s as speaker and audience, concrete image and meaning, sound and meaning, etc., etc. would provide constants for the matrix. The abilities of questioning and discrimination are operative in any interpretive activity so that there is no subject matter limitation in the application of this matrix. Hence one could use this matrix with novels, paintings, buildings, scientific works, etc.

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LOYOLA UNIV., CHICAGO

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Midwest Philosophy of Education
Nov. 9 - 10, 1990
Loyola University, Chicago

THE DISCIPLINE OF INTERPRETATION

I would like to present an approach to teaching which I use in my general humanities courses. These are General Humanities 201: Short Story, Poetry, Novels, Painting and Architecture and General Humanities 202: Drama, Music and Philosophy. It is an approach which treats education as the aquisition of ability rather than as the acquisition of information though it merges the two. I begin with the student's natural ability to ask questions and proceed to the learned ability to invent questions. Like many transitions from the natural to the artful, this process implies the need for practice. And practice divides into the "on what" and the "with what". The "on what" is the subject matter presented in the two courses above. The "with what" is where I come in. I try to introduce the students to the practice of a discipline, i.e., a structured mode of activity. So I try to present a method or way and enable them to become active in that way. My aim is to help them acquire the discipline of interpretation which helps them to make sense of what is presented.

I should like to present this activity as it might operate on some selected materials from the general humanities courses. I have in mind a letter of Matisse in which he comments on four of his line self-portraits which are included in the letter. The letter is a critical, philosophical document in its own right and the drawings are both subtle and beautiful. But then, having begun this form of activity, I should like to see if it can bear fruit and be extended to an area not usually covered in humanities courses, namely works of science. What I have found to be instructive is the brief (three and one-half pages) article of Watson and Crick on DNA. Thus the discipline will have been applied to literature, art and science. Do not be alarmed, the problem in these courses is not primarily the teaching of the several subject matters. It is rather to develop the student's ability to apply the discipline and extend its range of application to a variety of subject matters. Naturally once the range of inventing questions has been extended, the question of limitation or judgment arises. I will discuss that.

I contend that this activity is a general one and that it is what used to be called grammar (though with a rhetorical twist) but adapted to contemporary circumstances.

So the discipline amounts to the art of inventing questions directed toward the end of inventive interpretation which can be judged. This approach also enables me to formulate an interdisciplinary orientation (discipline now in the sense of subject matter) which is the general activity of interpretation.

I use questions so heavily because I have found that the question is the most efficient and productive instrument in the teaching and learning of reading, writing, thinking, speaking and listening.

INDEX TO THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MIDWEST PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION SOCIETY

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INTRODUCTION:

In 1977, The Midwest Philosophy of Education Society began publishing the proceedings of its annual meeting. An annual proceedings was published from 1977 until 1984, although no proceedings was published of the 1981 and 1984 meetings. Beginning in 1987, the Proceedings was published every two years. Copies of the Proceedings are now available as ERIC documents. The document numbers (ED numbers) are listed below. Some copies of the Proceedings are also indexed in the Institute for Scientific Information's Index to Social Sciences & Humanities Proceedings.

This index is primarily an author index. Items in the Proceedings only by title are listed by title. This index covers the period from 1977 to 1990. The most frequent contributors during this period are: Philip L. Smith -- 8, Robert P. Craig -- 7, Lawrence J. Dennis and George W. Stickel -- 6 each, Michael C. Smith and Ronald Swartz -- 5 each, and Arthur Brown -- 4.

YEAR	PROGRAM CHAIR	EDITORS	ERIC DOCUMENT NO.
1977	W. Krolikowski	R. Craig & F.C. Neff	ED 345 986
1978	F.C. Neff	J. Merritt, et al	SO 022 999
1979	D. Angus	M.C. Smith & A. Dupuis	ED 345 983
1980	P.L. Smith	P.L. Smith	ED 345 984
1982	A. Makedon	M.C. Smith & J. Williams	ED 241 407
1983	A. Makedon	M.C. Smith	ED 345 985
1985-86	D.B. Annis	P.L. Smith	SO 023 000
1987-88	P. Collins	L.J. Dennis	ED 319 670
1989-90	M.A. Oliker	D.B. Annis & M.A. Oliker	ED 345 987

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Moderator. "The Library of the Future." Illinois Library Association, Chicago, Illinois, May 3, 1991.

Lecture. "Critical Thinking in the Teaching of Social Foundations of Education." American Educational Studies Association, Chicago, Illinois, October, 1989. With Gary K. Clabaugh and Edward G. Rozycki.

Participant. "Trends in Technology: Impact on Library Service." Association of College and Research Libraries, Normal, Illinois, November, 1986.

Workshop. "Documentation in Philosophy of Education." Philosophy of Education Society, Cincinnati, Ohio, April, 1983. With Marjory Oliker.

Panel Discussion Chair. "Thomas F. Green's Predicting the Behavior of the Educational System." Missouri Valley PES, Kansas City, Missouri, April, 1982.

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